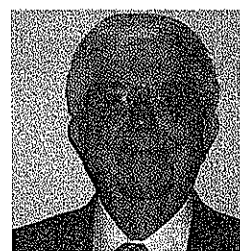




Where's Johnny?



by Casey Matuszak

AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER we have often thought about the people who served with us on active duty. We may want to get in touch with a forgotten friend or someone whose statement about our injury may be necessary for VA benefits. Whatever the reason, how do we get in touch with that person?

Before you start a search you need to gather as much information as possible concerning the person. This would include full name, birth date, rank, service dates, places served and the all important service number/Social Security number. If you are fortunate to have all this information, you can easily use one of the many search engines on the Internet. But if you don't, what do you do?

Federal agencies are required by law to enforce the Privacy Act, and are obligated to protect the privacy of an individual's personal information. However, many will allow the forwarding of messages. To forward a message, you write it and place it in an unsealed, stamped envelope. Include a note explaining who it is you are trying to reach, why, and add as much identifying information as you have. Place all of this in another envelope and address it to the agency. They will forward the letter if the address is available. Non-government agencies will have similar privacy guidelines.

You can send your information to

one or more of the following:

Department of Veterans Affairs: VA will only have the addresses if a claim was filed. Mail your request to the VA Regional office, not the VA Medical Center. Find VA's address at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/ro/rocontacts.htm>.

US Army: Will only assist for active duty personnel. Mail your request to Commander Soldier's Records Data Center (SRDC), 8899 East 56th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46249-5301, or phone 1-866-771-6357.

Marines: Information on retired or former marines. Mail to Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Manpower and Reserve Affairs (MMSR-6), 3280 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-5103. (703) 784-9310/1/2 or (800) 336-4649 Option#0. <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/retiree/buddy.cfm>

Air Force: Information only on individuals who are currently receiving compensation from the U.S. Air Force (active duty, Guard, Reserve and retired personnel). Send a check

or money order for \$3.50 made payable to DAO-DE RAFB and mail to the locator address at HQ AFPC/DPDXIDL, 550 C St West, Ste. 50, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4752. <http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/locatorservices/a/affocate.htm>

United States Navy: Individuals on active duty and those whose service ended less than a year ago. Send a check or money order for \$3.50 payable to U.S. Treasurer, and mail to Navy Worldwide Locator, Navy Personnel Command, PERS 312F, 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055-3120. Phone 1-901-874-3388. <http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/NavyWorldWideLocator/>

MOPH: If the person you are looking for was wounded, he may be a member of MOPH. Send your information to Membership, Springfield VA.

Two commercial sites that are free and can assist are:

- <http://www.military.com>
- <http://www.militaryconnections.com>

These are just a few of the most popular sites. National Archives has a site at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/locate-service-members.html> with links to both government and non-government locators. Good luck in your search! *